

Prayer Service for Schools

Opening Hymn: *As I Kneel Before You* (or other suitable hymn)

1. As I kneel before you, as I bow my head in prayer
take this day, and make it yours and fill me with your love.

Refrain: Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu.

2. All I have I give to you, every dream and wish are yours.
Mother of Christ, mother of mine, present them to my Lord.

Refrain: Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu.

Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you touched the heart of Edmund Rice and filled him with compassion for the poor many years ago. Help us to make good use of our time in school, to be grateful to our parents, to make the best of our gifts and talents and to say "yes" to God when he calls us to help him build a new and better world for the future. Just as Edmund Rice was inspired by the Presentation of Our Lady grant that we, too, may be inspired by it. This we ask through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reading 1: *The Presentation* (Adapted from St. Luke)

When Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a little girl, her parents, Joachim and Anne, took her to the Temple in Jerusalem and consecrated her in a special way to God. This event is now called the *Presentation* of our Lady in the Temple. Later when she had the baby Jesus she also brought him to the same Temple and also presented him to God. So there were two Presentations: one of Mary, when she was a little girl, and the second of Jesus, while he was a baby.

Both Jesus and Mary lived up to their "Presentation" by trying to do the will of God. Sometimes this was easy. But at other times it meant trouble, sorrow and suffering. God needs people to help Him make this world a better place. If we present ourselves to Him He will use us. We do not need to be rich or brainy or handsome to co-operate with God. We only need to do our best. Because God can write straight even with crooked lines.

Response: Our Lady of the Presentation

All: Pray for us.

Reading 2: *"Putting All the Parts Together"*

There were six blind people. They heard that the King was visiting the next village, riding on an elephant. None of them had ever seen an elephant. "An elephant", they said, "I wonder what an elephant is like?" They went to find out. Each of them went alone. The first held the elephant's trunk. The second, a tusk. The third, an ear. The fourth, a leg. The fifth, the stomach. The sixth, the tail. Then they went home, all sure that they now knew exactly what the elephant looked like.

They began to tell each other. "Oh, it's a fantastic elephant", said the first, "so slow and soft, long and strong". "No", said the one who had felt the tusk, "it's quite short and very hard." "Oh no", said the fourth who had felt the leg, "it's like a tree".

The other two joined in too. "It's like a wall", "it's like a rope". They argued and argued and their argument grew very bitter. They began to fight.

Then some one came who could see. "You are all right", said this person who could see. "All the parts together are the elephant".



Reflection:

God, also, is difficult to understand. Different people think of him in different ways. It is only in the next life that we will see all the parts and then know God fully. In this life we seem to be in the dark, groping around like the blind people feeling the elephant. If we ask God in prayer He will help us to understand him better.

Pause for silent prayer:

(At this point a tape with a hymn/meditative music could be played.)

Prayer for the Beatification of Edmund Rice:

O God, who in your love for the souls of innocent children, chose Edmund Rice to establish a new family in your Church for their instruction, look favourably, we beseech you, on his virtues and good works, and, if it be for your glory and the sanctification of souls, mercifully hear our prayer that soon he may be raised to the altars of your Holy Church. Amen.

Petitions:

Let us now place our requests in the hands of God confident that He will hear us.

1. Lord, we pray for our Holy Father, Pope John Paul, for our Bishop(s), that God will give them wisdom to lead us towards you. Response: Lord, hear our prayer
2. Lord, gather together all those who bear the name Christians: let them all be one with you and with one another. Response: Lord, hear our prayer
3. We pray for the sick in mind and body. Lord lay your healing hand upon them. Response: Lord, hear our prayer
4. We pray for our teachers and fellow students. Lord help us work together. Response: Lord, hear our prayer
5. We pray for our deceased relatives and friends. Gather them with you for all eternity. Response: Lord, hear our prayer

The Lord's Prayer:

Let us now say the prayer that Jesus taught us: *Our Father.....*

Final Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for health and remember the sick. We thank you for friends and remember the lonely. We thank you for food and remember the hungry. May the remembrance of your many gifts help us to use them for the betterment of mankind. Amen.

Concluding Hymn: *When Creation Was Begun* (or other suitable hymn)

1. When Creation was begun, God has chosen you to be,
Mother of his blessed son, Holy Mary full of grace.

Refrain: Ave(2), Ave Maria

2. When creation was restored you were there beside the
Lord Whom you cherished and adored, Holy Mary full of Grace.

Refrain: Ave(2), Ave Maria

